

shrubs and "nopals" are to be perceived. Further to the north the prospect is not altered, and the plateau remains as uniform, without the smallest hillock. On this plateau I have not seen any fragment of the eggs of *Apyornis*.

The chain of mountains which run along the coast appears to be all granitic. The strong currents which set round this coast and wash the foot of these mountains, tend daily to restrict the island on this side. Under the protection of this chain, to the south of the central mass and of the secondary formations, thoroughly characterized by a large species of *Nerinaea*, of Trochoid form, whose existence I have recognized in latitude $23^{\circ} 30' S.$, and longitude $42^{\circ} 40' E.$, corals probably grow, as they do at the present time on the south-west coast, and they have formed the base on which is raised the recent formation I have just mentioned.

The daily extension of the west coast is perceptible; the presence of two salt lakes, situated about ten leagues from the coast, from which they are only separated by a plain of sand, and where are found the same fish as in the sea, the immense arid delta which exists between the Kitoumbou and the Manoumbe, the little depth which exists for many miles from the shore, the daily development of the coral-banks—all demonstrate the enlargement of the western region of Madagascar.

Thus, while admitting the actual non-existence of the *Apyornis*, one is obliged to allow that this gigantic bird has lived at an epoch not far distant, seeing that its remains are found in the most modern formations, the continual development of which one still traces at the present day. It may perhaps have existed even at the commencement of our era; but when the country became peopled, it was quickly exterminated, as has been the case with the Moa (*Dinornis gigantea*) &c. of New Zealand.

9 September, 1867.

VI.—*Note on Lanius melanthes, Swinhoe, and on Lanius cephalomelas, Bp.* By Viscount WALDEN.

THE rediscovery in China of the dark and peculiarly coloured Shrike to which Mr. Swinhoe (*Ibis*, 1867, p. 405) has given the

title of *Lanius melanthes*, is of much value and interest. It sets at rest the doubts hitherto entertained as to the specific validity, if not as to the existence even, of such a Shrike; and although I have not had an opportunity of seeing Mr. Swinhoe's specimen, he has so fully described it that I have no hesitation in referring it to the *Lanius fuscatus* of Lesson, who appears to have first discriminated this species, giving in 1831 (*Traité d'Ornithologie*, p. 373) the following short notice of it—"Pie-grièche enfumée, *Lanius fuscatus*. Plumage brun de suie enfumé",—but without mentioning any locality for it.

In his "Monographie des Laniens" (*Rev. et Mag. de Zool.* 1863, p. 434, note) Bonaparte refers to Lesson's species in these words:—"Quid *Lanius fuscatus*, Lesson, Mus. Paris. ex China: luride fumigatus, alis caudaque brevioribus, sed rostro typico?"

Fortunately, the type-specimen came under the critical notice of M. Pucheran. In that author's admirable paper on the "Types Dentirostres" of the Paris Museum (*Arch. du Mus.* vii. p. 368, 1854-1855) we find these remarks:—" *Lanius fuscatus*. * * * Cet individu m'est indiqué comme originaire de Chine. Ses teintes sont bien noirâtres, surtout sur les côtés et en avant du cou. Il y a une teinte rousse en dessus, en dedans des tectrices alaires supérieures. Cet exemplaire est de grande taille comme le *Lanius shach*. Est-ce une variété mélanienne? Est-ce un individu vraiment enfumé? Ce sont des questions que l'avenir seul est appelé à résoudre." These questions Mr. Swinhoe has been able to answer. He does not regard it as a melanism, and it really seems to be a good species.

A specimen of this Shrike, preserved in the Leyden Museum, appears also to have attracted the attention of Dr. Hartlaub; for, in a paper entitled "Zwei unbeschriebene Vögel des Leydner Museums" (*Journ. für Orn.* 1855, pp. 361, 362), we find that eminent ornithologist, under the name of "*Lanius lugubris*, Temm.", describing another specimen of the same species in the following words:—"Supra obscure nigro-cinereus, tergo, uropygio et tectricibus caudæ superioribus nonnihil brunnescentibus; alis, cauda, fronte, superciliis et capitis lateribus nigris; remigibus, gula et jugulo obscure fuscis; subtus fusco-cinereus; crisso et subcaudalibus bruniori,

bus; subalaribus nigris; rostro plumbeo-corneo; pedibus nigris. * * * China. Grosse typische Art." Further on, in the same volume (p. 426), in his 'Index' to Dr. Pucheran's series of papers on the types in the Paris Museum, Dr. Hartlaub alludes to Lesson's species in a way which seems indirectly to identify it with that of Temminck; for he says, "*Lanius fuscatus*, Less. p. 368.—Quid? China. (Bona species: Hartl. Mus. Lugd.)" *

This Shrike seems to be closely allied to *L. tephronotus* (Vigors, P. Z. S. 1831, p. 43).

Lanius cephalomelas†, Bonaparte (Rev. et Mag. de Zool. 1853, p. 436), is another doubtful Shrike, which does not appear to have been satisfactorily identified. The Prince described it from Manilla specimens of Consul Lannoy, in the Brussels Museum, and of Kittlitz, in that of Frankfort. The diagnosis is thus given:—"Major: niger; subtus albus; dorso griseo, hinc inde albo, postice cum uropygio et hypochondriis pallidissime rufo: speculo alari remigibus interne ad basin, secundariis apice quoque, albis: cauda valde cuneata; rectricibus subtruncatis, prima et secunda latissime albo marginatis, tertia utrinque macula mediana marginali pogonii interni apiceque albis." It is impossible to read this description, coupled with the consideration of the Philippine origin of the types, without at once recognizing Sonnerat's "*Pie-grièche d'Antique*" (Voy. à la Nouv. Guin. p. 114, pl. 70), to which Scopoli (Fl. et Faun. Insub. ii. p. 85, no. 13) in 1786 gave the name of *Lanius nasutus*, Sonnerat's specimen having a prolonged and malformed maxilla. The careless Italian author says "mandibula inferiore elongata incurva", notwithstanding Sonnerat's observation, "La partie supérieure en est très-longue, et sa courbure paroît si excessive, qu'on pourroit croire que c'est un défaut de conformation dans l'individu qui a servi pour la description." Gmelin in 1788 (Syst. Nat. i. p. 301, no. 29), upon the same plate founded his *L. antiguanus*. This black-headed Shrike is closely allied to,

* I have an impression, although I cannot refer to the passage in which he did so, that Bonaparte subsequently united the two species.

† [This word is printed *cephalomelus* in the passage cited, but of course by mistake.—ED.]

if not identical with, the Hindostan *L. nigriceps* (Frankl. P. Z. S. 1831, p. 117). Indeed Scopoli's and Gmelin's designations have usually been associated with Franklin's on the hypothesis that Sonnerat described and figured an Indian specimen; but Bonaparte's species seems to establish the existence of a Philippine black-headed Shrike; and until specimens from both localities are compared, it will be reasonable to presume that they belong to two distinct species.

VII.—On a recently discovered Tanager of the genus *Calliste*.

By P. L. SCLATER, M.A., Ph.D., F.R.S., Secretary to the Zoological Society of London.

(Plate III.)

IN the 'Journal für Ornithologie' for 1866 (p. 163) Dr. Cabanis has given the characters of a new species of Tanager, of the genus *Calliste*, from Guatemala, and has done me the compliment of proposing to call it after me, *Calliste sclateri*. Unfortunately there already exists a *Calliste sclateri*, so named by Lafresnaye* (Rev. Zool. 1854, p. 207). This, it is true, is not a very distinct species, being little, if anything, more than a dark-coloured variety of *Calliste aurulenta*. But it will not, nevertheless, be advisable to call a second bird of the same genus by the same name; and I therefore propose to return the compliment paid to me by Dr. Cabanis, and to call the new Guatemalan species *CALLISTE CABANISI*.

Knowing the interest I take in the Tanagers generally, and in particular in those of the genus *Calliste*, Dr. Cabanis has been kind enough to forward to me for examination the unique specimen upon which his description was founded; and the accompanying figure (Plate III.) has been drawn from it. This example is not very fully adult, as Dr. Cabanis has already remarked; but there can be no question of its distinctness from all hitherto described species. It may stand as follows:—

CALLISTE CABANISI.

Calliste (sive *Callispiza*) *sclateri*, Cab. J. f. O. 1866, p. 163.

Supra viridescenti-cærulea, alis caudaque nigris cæruleo margi-

[* See Sclater's 'Monograph of *Calliste*,' p. 31, pl. xiv. fig. 1.—Ed.]